I: Mam--147 E-5 (1913-1914) 1924 FOR2 Mongo FOR2

304 B2 [III 291] personal vanity, and to excite the male. At the present time only the latter reason accounts for the practice in the region where our influence has been effective. The introduction of European fabrics, the expansion of the economy and the progress of civilization have led the women to clothe themselves and to hide and screen a large part of the body from indiscreet glances. [189] The small primitive loincloth has given way to a toga of variable length, which hides from the public eye that part [Fig. 112 appears here] of the body which is covered with tattoos. In

[291 301 304 142]

Fig. 115. Elegant Lady of the Bokala-Yaelima Region. Tattoos, Bracelets, and Necklaces.

such cases, the woman can no longer display her tattoos for the sake of vanity. [Figs. 113 and 114 appear here] If, despite this, some of them continue to have themselves tattooed just like the old matrons, it is because they hope to attract a man, to please him, and to be able to participate sooner in the pleasures of intimate life. When questioned on this subject, the natives are very definite. The men maintain that the raised tattoos [190] on

304 B3

certain parts of the female body is very exciting to them, essentially as a result of the very pronounced movements of the woman during sexual contact. This explanation, which according to the natives seems to be the only reason for tattooing the women of certain tribes (this applies, in our opinion, to the Bateke, Bandzoungo, Baboma, and, up to a certain point, to all the riparian peoples of Lake Leopold II), also enables us to explain the special character of the tattooing of Yaelima women. It extends all around the mons Veneris, follows the fold of the groin, and continues in concentric circles on the inside of the upper thighs. The tattoo scars on these parts of the women's body are usually more symmetrical and in more pronounced relief, and these characteristics increase in direct proportion to the nearness of the pubic region. Coquetry cannot be the reason for making these raised scars. Their presence is largely hidden, even by the flimsiest and most primitive loincloth. Among certain tribes, the loincloth completely covers this part of the body, and since native women exercise a great deal of care and modesty in hiding these tattoos from the public eye, it was only with great difficulty that we were able to verify their existence. Let us note in passing [194] that despite earnest endeavors, we never were able to persuade a native woman of the interior to be photographed without her loincloth. The civilized women, whether local demimondaines or housewives, were, it is true, less [191] timid. The natives themselves make a distinction between these tattoos and those which appear on other parts of the body, notably on the arms, back, and face.

Tattoos on the back, arms, and throat are always essentially decorative. We found them especially on the women, who are coquettish by nature even among the most primitive peoples. These tattoos generally lack the characteristic uniformity which is such a clear mark of the racial tattoos. The latter are found in their most characteristic form on the men, particularly on the forehead, temples, cheeks, and sometimes the chest. Among certain tribes, the women have also taken over this artificial deformation peculiar to the men. Elsewhere, the women have special tattoos which are clearly distinct from those of the men, and, finally, among some peoples the women have no racial tattoos.

L. Mam--183 E-6 (1913-1914) 1924 FOSS Mongo FOSS

Yaelima

This consists of a set of small curves drawn above the root of the nose, similar to those we previously noted among the Iyenga-Bekira, but usually sharper and more pronounced. This identical and characteristic motif seems to establish an affinity between these two groups, but it must be noted that the motif on the temples varies considerably from one region to another. Here we find again the rosette of the peoples of Lake Leopold II, although much larger. The concentric circles cover the temples, and very often they extend over a wider area as arcs, always concentric, are added above the cheeks.

Both men and women have adopted this tattoo.

2) Sexual tattoos, reserved for women.

These consist of scars in relief which are found on all parts of the body from just above and between the breasts to the middle of the thighs.

Fig. 120. Bokala-Yaelima Tattoos.

3) Ornamental or coquettish tattoos. [196]

These extend irregularly over all the other parts of the body, including the arms and back.

The tattoos in the second category form a series of concentric, rounded triangles whose tip is actually the mons Veneris.

The designs between the breasts and the navel vary considerably from one person to another. The rosettes and palm-leaf motif clearly predominate. The man does not use this type of tattoo, but the woman, on the other hand, takes a great deal of

I: Mem--154 C-8 (1913-1914) 1924 FO22 Mongo FO22
Dengese FO 16

paints with it, from which we may conclude that her chief aim is a heightening of sensation in sexual relations.

The motifs or designs in the third category are extremely varied [197] and most irregular, as we noted earlier. Aside from the concentric rosette, we saw the most varied designs: small dots, stippled lines, crescents, diamond shapes, palm-leaf motifs, and other figures cross, cut into each other, are superimposed on each other, and are mixed in such a way that the scars seem to have been scattered at random all over the body.

Men and women both have adopted these designs, but the

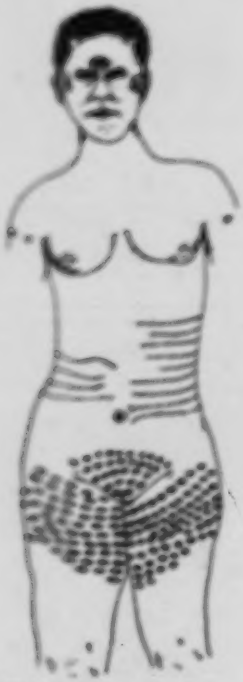

Fig. 121. Ipanga-Batitu Tattoos.

Fig. 122. Bokala-Yaelima Tattoos.

woman seems to be especially fond of them. In this respect the Bokala and Yaelima differ sharply from their neighbors to the west, but seem to resemble closely the tribes to the east, especially the peoples of the Dekese region. Photographs sent by Mr. Van den Broeck and designated as Dengese show us the undeniable

1: Maes--157 E-5 (1913-1914) 1924 FO32 Mongo FO32
Yaelima
304 171
304 171 133
[302 142]

we made of the many figures we saw in this region showed us that the variations are so numerous, so diverse, and so closely intertwined that it is totally impossible to use this as a basis for determining ethnic sectors with clearly-defined characteristics.

Finally, if we consider only those tattoo figures to which

Fig. 124. Yaelima Headdress and Tattooing. Typical Longomo or Dignitary.

we attributed, if not a familial origin, at least a familial nature [200] (incitement to sexual relations), we see that throughout the region this type of tattoo is peculiar to women.

From Leopoldville to the confines of Batitu territory and even among some Bokala women, this tattoo consists (where it still exists) of a number of small, aligned dots, just like the ornamental tattoos.

Among the Ipanga-Batitu, these figures sometimes embellish the arms and part of the back, while among the other tribes they are less elaborate.

I: Maes--156 E-5 (1913-1914) 1924 FO32 Mongo FO32

364
177
833 In the region of the Yaelima, Dengese, and some of the Bokala, this tattoo consists of a series of broken, concentric lines with the pubic region as the main center.

We do not know if this tattoo is also worn by the Basongo-Meno and Bankutshu women, but this seems probable to us. We can, however, assert that among those peoples this tattoo does not extend to the upper thighs, except for one or two lines of small incised dots running parallel to the fold of the groin.

192
302

Fig. 125. Yaelima Tattoing and Headdress Adorned with Peanuts Smeared with Ngula.

The incisions for ornamental and sexual tattoos are usually made by women, although a man sometimes takes over this task.

304 The operation is carried out at very irregular intervals and at practically any [201] time of life. Moreover, it requires several sittings, usually spaced from 10 to 15 days apart.

The tattooing knife, which is also used for depilation, consists of a small, broad iron blade with a curved, very sharp cutting edge.

are removed by the fact that they are in a group, so that no one feels singled out by the gaze of the passer-by. Washing away from major streams is always surrounded by more propriety. For this purpose a small enclosure (*lisombe*) is built behind the hut or among the banana trees, or a small thicket is allowed to grow there. By this means the native is sheltered from indiscreet glances if he wants to take a bath or give himself an enema. As a matter of fact these things are done preferably after dark.

5) Violent anger or sorrow drown out modesty, just as they momentarily destroy the use of reason and suppress all feelings which are contradictory or simply different. In this situation, too, the man shows himself superior to the woman. He is less impulsive, calmer, less prone to lose control of his actions, to be carried away by his anger. Thus he almost never strips himself bare. The woman, on the other hand, readily strips off all her clothing. This behavior is extremely common; a woman undresses completely whenever she experiences great sorrow or intense anger. Luckily for propriety's sake some friend or relative always hastens to cover at least the essential parts. For a woman who throws off her clothing exposes herself to the mockery and jeers of spectators. (1)

1. An angry woman may also undress to shame her husband: it is a way of insulting and mocking him.

6) The Nkundó practice sexual intercourse only at night. I believe that this custom is due to their sense of propriety, [57] supplemented by a superstitious explanation which will be described in detail in Article V.

7) The sense of modesty has its fullest expression in relation to parents, brothers, sisters, etc. Thus it is unheard of that a son should see his mother naked: *bɔna ɛfɔnɛkɛ ɛsumɛ nyɛngɛ*. If an adult daughter is ill and requires personal care (such as an enema, for example), the father has to take care of her himself if no other female relative is near by. But their sense of modesty is such that they both shed tears over the event. As a matter of fact this situation

874 It goes without saying that the feeling of sexual modesty and
511 its various manifestations among these people are being transformed by two different currents. On the one hand, their moral laxity is increased by their contact with all sorts of other peoples, by a greater freedom, by the partial emancipation of women, and by the attraction of the large centers and their luxury. On the other hand, there is the preaching of Christian morality, although its effects are still very slight and certainly do not counterbalance the influences mentioned above.

## Article II. Preparation for Sexual Life

### 1. The Woman's preparation

● 893

When a girl wishes to indulge in pleasures of the flesh, she prepares her sexual organ in advance. The preparation itself consists of "opening the way" (*lifola mbéka*). This operation, which is repeated several times, is performed in hiding, preferably in the forest. The girl may or may not have companions with her who share her intentions. Each girl operates on herself. In order to gradually enlarge the organ, a girl uses progressively thicker shoots of the *bokéngé* or *bokaaki* plant (*Costus afer*), making sure first to remove the tip. Later these shoots are replaced by the *lombélé* fruit of the *bokómbé* plant (*Afrostemmum*) or, more infrequently, by a young manioc tuber.

[894]

This is the general practice; exceptions are few or nonexistent. It is followed because the girls want the event to which they aspire to occur without difficulty (*bólosa bólífo'ikeela*).

837 In addition to this basic preparation, girls [65] also wash the
515 private parts of their bodies. This is a cleanliness measure which they continue to practice save in exceptional cases for the rest of their lives. According to my informants, the native woman -- as a very general rule -- stresses this cleanliness as much for herself as for the sake of not repelling her husband or lover. When a girl begins to practice this personal hygiene, it is a sign that she wants to begin her sexual life.

prohibition under any circumstances. I have heard these same terms used also by the natives in the vicinity of Coquilhatville.

The body becomes flabby and without strength, and this weakness ends in a fatal paralysis (bomgé nsúkyuko or ckaffard). In addition, the girls feared that their sexual organs, not yet fully formed, would be torn. They were also imbued with a very intense fear: bofólo w'ámolo, "the fear of males," bofólo w'ésaso, "the fear of females." They also feared death -- bofólo'ofé lofé. The parents added that sexual acts were free from danger only between persons of the requisite age.

This does not mean that children did not commit indecent acts. The game of lómo, in which little girls try to cook (and which is always one of their favorite games (3) as it probably is throughout the

3. Some boys imitate this game in order to acquire the habit of preparing their own meals. Later they benefit from it on more than one occasion.

world), often gave rise to it. Small boys joined in the game in order to taste the meal. And quite naturally they began to play at "husband and wife," more or less. Often this game involved only innocent imitations, but other times touching and exhibitions occurred between children of the same sex or of opposite sexes. This game is far more dangerous nowadays, [81] because of a change in the attitude of young people toward sexual matters.

The game of yembaalongo, in which boys, imitating monkeys, chase each other through the trees and creepers can -- and does - result in reprehensible scenes.

In former times most girls were married before puberty. But their husbands did not touch them until they had completed their normal development.

Among some individuals the fear of sexual relations was so deeply rooted that it persisted even beyond the age limit and was

conquered only by repeated assaults of passion. Thus it is generally known among the natives that young women used to seek refuge in their mother's house when the husband wanted to begin making use of his rights as a husband. The mother would try to persuade her daughter to submit to the law of life. But sometimes, if her child seemed too resistant, the mother made excuses for her and asked the husband to consider her daughter's youth. The man usually wanted to remain on good terms with his mother-in-law so he did not insist and resigned himself to waiting till nature influenced the spirit and heart of his wife.

Since young people were brought up in deep fear of dangerous relations, it should not surprise us that this feeling became a real habit and did not disappear spontaneously the moment a certain degree of liberty was permitted. As a matter of fact, could we not make similar observations in Europe?

This is the natural explanation for the praiseworthy degree of morality among adolescents in the past.

Nowadays all that has changed. The young people follow where their passions lead them. Not the slightest check is placed on their impulses. Parents pay only slight attention to the conduct of their children. [82] It is better not to inquire into the morality of modern youth. Husbands no longer respect the bodies of their adolescent brides, who are themselves quite used to a sexual life and eagerly look forward to it, and no longer know the feeling of "the fear of men." Should we then be astonished at the frightening decrease in the birth rate (1) and the ever increasing spread of venereal

1. The natives say that in the past young wives quickly became pregnant. And now ...

diseases, which seem to have been unknown in the past?

The reasons for this change will be investigated further on, under the letter C.

B. Between adults. Here the Nkundó are very lenient. There is a difference, however, between the socio-legal and moral viewpoints, although as we shall see the latter is influenced by the former.

A woman is entirely free, legally speaking, as long as the first payment on her bride price has not been made. No man has

soon as her family becomes aware of her condition. The accomplice is made officially responsible and is required to accept this responsible and is required to accept this responsibility by publicly pledging his willingness to take all consequences upon himself. This pledge like all pledges is called odenge. It consists of a knife, a ring of copper or brass, a spear, or similar objects. (2)

2. The same custom is practiced in the case of pregnancy resulting from adultery.

Article V. Sexual Intercourse

Although this subject is extremely delicate and therefore difficult to investigate and describe, it does not seem pointless to note here a few details with which I have become acquainted. We will discuss in succession a few circumstances relative to the act, then rape, and finally what are called incomplete acts. [92]

1. Circumstances relative to the act

The Nkundó have intercourse lying on their sides. Nowadays, natives who have had frequent contacts with Whites are beginning to abandon the old manner for that of the Europeans. The spirit of imitation probably plays some part in the transformation which is beginning, but the gradual spread of the knowledge that the European system makes conception more likely is also a factor.

Even for illicit relations our natives seldom choose the forest or near-by palm or banana groves. Usually they prefer an isolated hut, or they take advantage of the absence of witnesses who might intrude on them. At night they are generally afraid of anything that stirs in the forest.

The Nkundó have sexual relations only during the night. To do so in the daytime would be to risk being stricken by a mortal illness called bombilé (derived from mbilé "noon," by extension, "day").

833 753 684 which has a strong resemblance to sleeping sickness. (1) One of its

1. It is not sleeping sickness itself, however, for that disease seems formerly to have been unknown in this area.

symptoms is a weakness of the lower limbs. Instances are cited of individuals who were unable to resist their passions and were punished in this manner. Apparently only the woman dies. As soon as her family discovers that she is stricken, the guilty woman denounces her accomplice. The latter is held responsible and is required to pay a heavy indemnity, which may amount to several dozen copper rings.

833 751 Here as in many other situations the Nkundó have found a way to avoid the danger. There is an antidote (nsengó), and it is water (bǎsi bale nsengó ɛâ bombilɛ́). Thus those who are unable to control their aroused passions during the day, satisfy it in a shallow stream.

833 753 The fear of bombilɛ́ has been greatly shaken [93] by colonization. If we are to believe the natives, foreign soldiers are responsible for this change also. But the behavior of the latter could not completely destroy the ancient feeling, probably due to a natural shame which makes them seek darkness and privacy for acts of this sort.

833 [515] [842] After intercourse a native woman usually gives herself a douche. She does so for the sake of cleanliness. It often happens, however, that she does not wait long enough before doing so, and thus she neutralizes the effect of the intercourse. This is chiefly a matter of carelessness. Nevertheless, under certain circumstances she may use this means to prevent conception. (1)

1. See Chapter X, Article I, 2.

833 826 According to my informants, some women have constitutional abnormalities which repel men. As everything readily becomes public, such flaws are quickly known after marriage, though not quite as readily beforehand. Actually love can -- and often does -- cause them to be overlooked. But after the first ardor has cooled, such a situation may become a threat to the stability of a marriage. When quarrels

833 become somewhat violent, the women recall these flaws, to the
826 great shame of the person who suffers from them. The same is true of the weakness of some of the men which, like an excess of sexual activity, can cause difficulties in a household.

2. Rape

839 Rape in the true sense of the word -- that is, the abuse of a woman by the use of violence -- is most unusual among the Nkundó. If a woman does not consent, the angry seducer leaves her, often insulting her to the best of his ability. I know of only one case of rape, which occurred some time ago and caused much consternation in the region. Banángá, the daughter of Iloko [94] Is Éfekele of Lofelí (Bongíli), was at that time living with her mother's clan the Bonyeka (Bonkoso). She had not yet fully attained physical maturity (her breasts were still very small). One day she went into the forest and did not return in the evening. The family was alarmed, and her father and her uncle Mpénda éa Nkotonkale went to look for her. Finding traces of fresh blood, they followed them till they found Banángá's corpse buried in the nsululu. She had died of hemorrhage; her sex organs, torn, showed the unmistakable signs of rape. People had their suspicions, but it has never been possible to prove the identity of the criminal. If there had been proof, he would not have escaped the mortal vengeance of the unfortunate victim's parents.

All the data I have been able to collect indicates that other instances must undoubtedly have occurred.

3. Incomplete acts

832 Here we are speaking of what moralists call actus impudicitiae, that is, acts whose nature physically leads to sexual pleasure.

Obscene bodily contacts between persons of opposite sex are preparatory acts which excite; even touching the breasts, the abdomen, and taking a person by the arms are included in this category.

4. Onanism [coitus interruptus]

893 Onanism also seems to be unknown. No doubt many women have learned this vice through their concubinage with Europeans, but they have not spread it. The same may be said of involuntary onanism. For the native does not look for sensual refinements; rather he follows his natural impulse. (1)

1. The practice described in Chapter X, Article III, 3, may be slightly tainted with onanism; it could certainly lead to such a practice, but it is not caused by perversion.

## Article VII. Incest

895 614 We here must distinguish between 1) sexual relations between distantly related kin and 2) between close kin.

1. Among distant relatives

Incest among distant relatives (in the Nkundó sense of the word) has existed since time immemorial. It is called lonkâna (bombaka among the Bombwanja). Lonkâna is derived from nkâna, "brother, sister." The expression lisla j'ólólo, "sexual union in the village," is also used. The term lonkâna is applied to relations between members of families which are only very distantly related (not at all related, according to our notions) but between whom marriage is not permitted. Thus one hears that such and such kin groups do not marry each other (bafoyakumbólé) but they commit lonkâna. Two kin groups of this sort may be considered closely related clans. The groups between whom lonkâna is practiced each has its own cemetery, while those between whom it is absolutely forbidden share a common cemetery. Thus, to cite an example, the "village" [98] of Elanga l'Imomo l'Ontole (Bongili) is composed of three kin groups, as the name indicates. The Imomo settlement is partially located in the

## Article I. Girls

584 According to Nkundó custom it is acceptable for an expected child, not yet born or still very young, to be promised in marriage to X or Y. This practice was formerly very common and is still quite prevalent today. It is called banda bǒna or bǒmoto, literally, "to count a child" or "to count a woman." The ikulá is paid at the time of the promise. Later the matter is carried out in the usual fashion; the other parts of the bride price are paid either while the fiancée is young or, preferably, at the time when she goes to her husband.

584 855 Until that time, if one of the girl's relatives is already a wife of a polygamist husband-to-be or of one of his relatives, the child is brought up in her husband's family from a fairly early age, depending on the circumstances. She lives with her relative. She may be barely seven or eight years old, for example. If no one in her husband's clan can take care of her, [232] she spends only one or two weeks there to become acquainted, little by little, with people and places; she repeats the visit from time to time. Her mother accompanies her, for being so young she could not get used to being there alone, without support, without her parents. Therefore it is necessary to wait till she is old enough to be somewhat independent and able to manage by herself. That time usually comes around the [145] beginning of puberty, thus sometime between the ages of twelve and fifteen.

584 ●833 Like an adult woman, she is already called bompáka or wálr, depending on the portion of the bride price that has been paid. She has all the duties and privileges of a wife: sexual relations, food preparation, care of the household, etc. There is no set date or age for the beginning of cohabitation. This matter is settled between the husband and his parents-in-law. The latter do not have the right to [606] delay the time, even if their daughter is still too young, but they can make use of their great influence over their son-in-law. The modern [78] [571] generation is not shocked by sexual relations between an adulterer [sic] and a girl who has not reached puberty. Besides, all is in order from the legal standpoint; since the man has paid the bride price, he is the

584 legitimate husband and is entitled to his wife. Everything depends
● 833 on his personal attitude, his passion, or his respect for the body of his young wife. If he is reasonable he will be very careful during his relations with her or will abstain altogether, so as not to "damage" her body. But from the legal standpoint he may do as he chooses. Thus there are adults who have regular relations -- one way or another -- with a wife whose breasts are not in the least developed. In such cases marital relations take place before nubility. (1) The

[882]

1. Note that the immature girl is not called filingo in Nkundó, as Engels ("Les Wangata," Revue congolaise, 1910, p. 36) maintains. This word is but the Nkundó transformation of the word virgo. There is no specific term for "prepubescent." A girl who is not yet a woman but is no longer a child is called itembeleke.

consequences with respect to the birth rate may easily be guessed. [233] It may also happen that the husband himself has not reached puberty. This fact presents no obstacle to cohabitation. As soon as he feels that he is a man, he builds his hut and the couple live there together. In all these cases the girl often goes to her parents' home, and sometimes her visits extend for weeks during which she does not see her husband.

Formerly things did not work out in this fashion. The young wife often refused to participate in the sexual act, especially if the husband was considerably older than she. Her reaction was due to her natural modesty and timidity, together with her education. A polygamous husband usually respected her feelings, till she gradually came around. When her normal physiological development was completed and her love reached a sufficient intensity, she would begin to follow her instincts. In the light of what was said in Chapter I, Part 2,, Article IV, 2, A, we may readily accept our informants' statements on this score; the situation seems altogether natural.

2: Hulstaert--249 M-5 (ca. 1930) 1938 FO32 Mongo FO32
Nkundu

## Article III. Relations between Spouses; Their Various Rights and Duties

593x 833 Spouses are obliged to fulfill the duties and perform the tasks incumbent upon them.

It is difficult to say just how far the sense of duty to fulfill the debitum conjugale extends among the Nkundó. Normally, they very frequently fulfill this obligation toward each other. But after a good quarrel they abstain, either through mutual consent or because one of them refuses. If one of the parties fails seriously and repeatedly [506] in this respect, the question is resolved by a divorce. The response to temporary lapses is limited to reprimands, disputes, blows, and other common reactions. It should be added that continence is required [834] during the ekelé period after the birth of a child and after setting up a new hunting enclosure (lokombo) or a new fishing weir (bosaka), before the third piece of a game or fish is caught.

### 1. Meals

593x 264 A couple never take their meals together. The husband eats the food prepared for him and served to him by his wife alone, with his grown sons, or with friends or relatives. The wife herself eats with her small children, her daughters, or her female relatives. The two sexes never mingle at meals.

593x 521 The same rule applies to talks, but it is much less strictly maintained; it is not rare to find that, for one reason or another, women participate in the conversation of men.

It will not be long before, through the influence of Christianity, [266] women will generally be admitted in the conversations of the opposite sex. Developments with respect to mixed meals will come with much more difficulty; in practice the question has not even been broached.

593x 348 [354] Thus one finds a kitchen next to the bedroom or separated from the hut; in addition to being the place where food is prepared, it is where the woman spends her day. The kitchen is sometimes a structure separated from the dwelling itself, sometimes a part of the house separated from the bedroom by a partition containing a door.

595^ [431] Thus a favorite is in every way the object of her husband's preference. He divides with her all presents he receives, while the other wives are not included in this expression of generosity. [853] But in the matter of sexual relations, apart from his trips, he has obligations to all of them. The most he can do is to add one night to the usual number (see below).

The co-wives adapt fairly well to this preferential system. Nevertheless, there is a good deal of backbiting on account of it. It may also happen that one or another of the wives is jealous to the point of being unable to bear it. [347] The signs of her rancor [516] multiply, and a divorce results in the end.

[766] The nkɔ́ndɛ́ does not have to go into mourning for anyone other than her husband. Even then she does not remove her clothing. But she does not have to abide by mourning regulations either for her parents or her own children.

[587] Like the other wives, the favorite is passed on through inheritance. But she cannot be taken as a bosɔ́lɔ́ by anyone except an elder brother of the deceased.

595^ 192 Nkɔ́ndɛ́ is the specific term by which a favorite is designated. Its etymology is unknown to me. The word is used everywhere, although the Injɔ́lɔ́ often say lokílo (whose etymology is equally obscure). Another less common (older?) term known to the Bonkoso, Bongili, Wǎngatɛ, and Bakɛ̂ala is bongilí or bongijí (1). In addition

1. The Ekonda call the favorite bokɔ́lo. The Elanga of Losanganya say bofií, a name borne by certain women among the Nkundɔ́ between Jwalɛ́ and Boloko. Might this also be an old name?

to the term ikundaka, already cited, there is also the word ebɛ́lɛ́kɛ́, a generic term meaning "preference, predilection" or, when applied to a child or a slave, "an object one does not want to dispose of." The favorite is also called ɛ̂fɔ́kɛ̂mɛ́, "untouchable," because other men may not have relations with her.

595x cultivate. Whatever food he has been able to obtain (from hunting and fishing, the fruit of palm trees, etc.) must be impartially distributed by the bomátsa. He is required to eat food prepared by each one, either on the same day or, more frequently, each in turn.

595x The same holds true for their intimate relations. He must divide his nights equally among them all and in turn (-kafa mpóngó). Usually he spends three or four nights with the same one. He is not allowed to favor one wife over another. He may add an extra night to the usual number only in favor of the bomátsa or the favorite. If he wants to have continuous relations with the favorite, he goes on a trip with her for a real or invented reason.

Partiality is sharply criticized and gives rise to violent domestic quarrels. It may result in the breaking up and dispersion of the harem. It is very badly tolerated, especially in sexual matters. The husband must therefore watch himself carefully and respect the rights of each and every one. Exceptions are made only with regard to women who occupy a special rank in the harem, and then only with respect to the privileges or duties that go with the position.

On their set nights, the women go to cohabit with their husband in his house. He seldom goes to their houses unless he has no hut of his own. Each wife knows her turn, and none of them are ashamed to let the others know when it comes. On the contrary, it is sometimes in their interest to do so.

595x There is no sharing of property among co-wives except in the case of a bibísa. Each one takes care of her own household, does her own cooking, cares for her own children, cultivates her [360] own crops. Each one has her own tools and utensils. They may help each other if they wish to, however. Especially for fishing they often go together, particularly for scooping ponds.

841 they could count. Nevertheless, if it happens to a young unmarried mother, little or no fuss is made over it because no one can feel wronged; at most the culprit is scolded. For a married woman, on the other hand, it is one of the most serious infractions. Her husband has an immediate right to the fetus that would have become his child. He cannot beat or mistreat the offender in punishment, for her condition will not permit violence, but he can abandon her to her fate by refusing her all assistance, in particular by refusing to bring her firewood, the heat of which she greatly needs under such circumstances. For she has done him an enormous wrong and has acted with real malice (aɔ̂njokel'inkúnyá, he says), since he married her chiefly so that she would give him descendants. If she dies it is her own fault. Even her family will not support her, for
[682] they would be accused of being involved in the crime; inevitably they would lose the case and be condemned to indemnify the husband.

843 An abortion which is ascertained to be involuntary [i.e., a miscarriage] is treated like an accident or an illness and the appropriate legal stipulations are applied to it. Thus if it happens while the woman is at her parents' home, the responsibility for it falls on them. Usually the palaver is settled in a friendly manner; the family makes a few nkomí payments, and the question is closed. If relations between the husband and his son-in-law are somewhat strained, the dispute may be drawn out and may result in the breaking up of the marriage. If the woman dies from the accident, the rules given in Article X of the preceding chapter come into play. [469]

## Article II. Conception and Pregnancy

842 The Nkundó have only a partial notion of the phenomena of
● 833 conception. They are well aware of which acts cause the procreation of children. They have a perfect knowledge of anatomy and a rich vocabulary pertaining to sexual life. But they know only as much about physiological processes as experience can teach them. Furthermore, they believe that the act of procreation must be repeated several times in order to produce its natural result. Note,

Note,

842 finally, that sexual relations are strictly forbidden to them during
833 menstruation (-kona or éna nsóngé, literally "to be ill from" or "to
[843] see the moon," and other similar expressions). The reason given is that a woman in that difficult condition should be spared all additional annoyance.

1. Elímá

842 The Nkundó attribute the procreation of children sometimes
776 to God (Njakomba) and sometimes to spirits (elímá, pl. bilímá). God forms (-ánga) the children in the mother's womb, but at the same time the bilímá provide the men among the progeny. (1)

[782]

1. Contrary to what is reported by Father Lestaeghe (Congo, 1922, Vol. 1, p. 363) concerning the Ekonda, the tribes that I have known never address prayers for children to God, although they attribute the gift of children to Him. This matter does not concern God (Njakomba or Mbombiándá) directly, but rather a particular elímá.

Sterility, which is a common phenomenon here, is not imputed to sorcery but is considered an innate flaw. Natives usually claim that God refuses them children.

There is no point in trying to make the natives resolve this apparent contradiction; they would not succeed. They simply state the two points. I say "apparent contradiction," for as the Nkundó admit that the bilímá are subject to Njakomba, the contradiction is not real, and the two propositions can be [470] reconciled by explaining the intervention of the spirits as an operation which is dependent on divine action: they are secondary, intermediary causes, although our natives do not make this philosophical analysis.

To explain all the beliefs pertaining to spirits would be to go outside the framework of this study. Nevertheless, we cannot leave out those details which closely touch on our subject.

843 a woman's mother proceeded with the ceremony in the absence of the husband and his family. The latter were furious. They revealed the matter so that if anything should happen later to the mother or the child the law would be on their side. In that way the husband could evade responsibility and place the blame on his wife and her family so that they would have to pay an indemnity.

The pregnant woman does not remove the paint for three or [301] four weeks after the ceremony. Nowadays the use of paint having [178] disappeared except for certain occasions and among older persons, it is left on for only one night. In addition the surface smeared has been reduced to a line in the middle of the head or even one single spot.

[193] During this ceremony the Bombwanja have a public confession [837] (etato) of the lovers. But since the Bokóté wait until after delivery, we will deal with it later on.

On the night following the ceremony described, the couple [833] [476] "fasten the fetus" through their carnal union. Were they to omit this act, the child would die before birth.

For subsequent pregnancies the fastening of the fetus is no longer preceded by the same formalities.

The couple continue to have relations during the entire [833] period of pregnancy "in order to open an easy passage for the child." 843 On the other hand, they must strictly observe marital fidelity. 837 Nevertheless, a polygamist may have relations with his other wives.

In addition to this essential art, the interdict also includes a secondary part; the couple may not even commit acts even very remotely related to procreation. Thus they may not:

1) Touch in any way whatsoever -- even to shaking their hands -- persons with whom they have had adulterous relations; such persons must therefore be avoided.

2) Sit next to such persons.

3) Look at them.

4) Enter a house or apartment where they are.

5) Eat "from the same pot."

6) Lie in another couple's bed.

7) Other persons may no longer sleep in the bed of the couple bound by the bokeka.

M 946 for and fed so that she may regain her strength rapidly. [486]

3. Seclusion

After childbirth the mother remains secluded (-ulama) in her hut for several weeks -- two, three, or more, depending on circumstances and especially on her husband's social position. Her seclusion is called julé. The hut bears the same name, or else it is called janga, "palm leaf." Sometimes the term ekelé is also applied to it, denoting the period of seclusion with all the special regulations it involves. These are as follows:

M [184] 1) Meals. In some tribes the woman may already eat on the day of the delivery. But among others she is only permitted to drink. The reason for this fast is given in the form of a legend. One day P [846] long ago a Botswa asked his master for a little manioc, but the master refused to give it to him. The master's wife had just given birth. Annoyed by the refusal, the Botswa cursed his master, saying: "From now on your women will have to fast the day they give birth." (1) Another explanation is that at sometime in the

1. Batswa women never fast under such circumstances.

past someone refused food to a slave who was about to be sacrificed at a feast of the lifting of mourning. Tribes and villages that do not give any reason of this sort permit a woman to eat in the evening, if the delivery takes place in the morning.

M [833] A mother's first meal is prepared by a woman who has performed the carnal act the preceding night. She goes to draw water, and on her return she fastens or attaches over the door of the seclusion hut a piece of palm (jánga) or, among the Bombwanja, a piece of dried banana leaf; in this way she informs everyone that it M [262] is a house of ekelé. Then she prepares the food, which consists of bananas with fish or a hen in palm-oil sauce. It is eaten by the mother and her husband as well as the cook. Their very young children may also delight in it, but [487] the older ones, approaching puberty, may not. The newborn child is given a tiny bit of the sauce to taste.

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[589] For a young unmarried mother, the meal is prepared by a girl who has not reached puberty or a woman who is quite old, that is, by someone who does not engage in sexual intercourse.

2) Various regulations. From the time of the preparation of the first meal until the end of the bokeka, that is, until the day the umbilical cord becomes detached, the hearth of the seclusion hut is sacred, so to speak. Apart from the couple and the assistants, no one may enjoy it or profit from it, either to light anything from it or eat anything that has been prepared there. However, some men have a means of lifting the prohibition pertaining to the fire. Upon the hearth and all the hearths of the village or a group of houses, depending on the situation, they let fall a few drops of a special concoction.

It is also forbidden to sweep or pick up the ashes from the fire. Everything must stay put until the umbilical cord of the newborn child becomes detached.

During the entire period of seclusion, the mother is assisted by a kinswoman (or one of her husband's kinswomen; among the Bombwanja there are always two), who is the wujisa, "the one who makes the seclusion" (from the verb uja). The seclusion should not be thought of as that of a hermit; the mother may go out as soon as her condition permits, and the helper goes about her occupations, but she does not do so more than necessary. Rather the hut is a house of prohibitions.

During this period the mother and her helper do not do farm
[834] work. In addition they must abstain from carnal relations and from all contacts with the opposite sex, in conformity with the customs explained in Article II, 3, above. The ekelé extends to the husband and to any other person who enters the hut. Any infraction results in the death of the mother or the child in the same manner as in the case of the bokeka (see loc. cit) . [488]

3) The end of the bokeka. When, at the end of four or five days, the umbilical cord becomes detached, the news is announced to the whole village, so that everyone may go back to their
● [833] work that has been suspended. The following night the father and mother perform the conjugal act to "destroy the bokeka and

846 to be able to nurse the child together." This does not mean that
833 from then on they may have regular sexual relations, for these are not permitted until after the end of seclusion. But if they were to omit the act at this time, they would have to abstain from it until the child is weaned. The Nkundó say that the act is performed "only a little." For many it becomes masturbation; others withdraw before obtaining the effect of the act. In no case may the act reach its natural climax. The reason for this practice is unknown to me. Perhaps it is done in order not to molest the woman while she is in a painful condition.

The next day the ashes in the hearth of the seclusion hut
846 are swept out, and the fire becomes "ordinary"; anyone may use it and eat food prepared on it.

4) The umbilical cord is dried on the bolíkó (a tray or shelf) and then buried at the foot of a young banana tree planted for that purpose, preferably under a bonkoní tree if possible. The ashes and sweepings from the seclusion hut are thrown there. The banana tree is called nkíndá. (1) Its fruit may be eaten only by the child's

[824] 1. This is a generic term used for any banana tree planted for a special purpose (a magical practice, a game, etc.).

[753] grandfather and grandmother. If another person eats it, he will be punished with a headache of a nervous type.

The umbilical cord is always buried in the father's native
846 soil. People who are far from home (laborers for the Whites, etc.)
614 preserve the umbilical cords of their children with great care in order to take them back [489] when they return to their village, or send them back when a favorable opportunity arises. The Nkundó hold to this usage tenaciously, because a person whose umbilical cord is not buried in the lands of his paternal clan has no authority in the group. The person involved would meet with the following objection: ntákokúndela lokolé, ntákokundela lokokí, óyakúmya ngámo? olé nk'eyâya, "The lokolé was not beaten for you, your

837 Note, finally, that the confession is restricted to married
783 women. It is never expected of a young unmarried mother. There-
853 fore it would seem to be a practice connected with marriage (a social institution) and not with childbirth (a physiological phenomenon).

This confession is called etato or lotato, from the verb
[192] -tata, "to confess," (for which the generic term, sanga, "to say," is sometimes substituted).

I was unable to find any reason for this practice other than that of avoiding the death of the child. It is evident, however, that this explanation does not exhaust the question, although it is entirely possible that the original and deeper meaning has been lost without leaving any trace in the minds of the present generation. [496]

3) During the entire duration of nursing, the mother must
853 not be separated from her child. For the usual circumstances of
933 daily life, this rule is broadly interpreted; but during sexual relations it is strict, and no exceptions or excuses are permitted. Negligence under these circumstances would inevitably bring about the death of the child by ndota as soon as the mother took it back. This rule holds for legitimate relations as much as for illicit ones. Therefore the mother must always keep her child at her breast.

4) If at some point during nursing, the milk no longer flows
953 in sufficient quantity, the mother is given a potion consisting of
[157] the extract of the bark of the bolóngé tree (which has a fruit con-
[278] taining a very sweet milky sap). Then she eats vegetables called lotélé. (1)

1. The leaves of this plant are also ordinarily eaten as vegetables, but they are consumed especially by those who possess the modern magical practice known as boyaóli.

5) An accident to which the Nkundó attach great importance
[262] is the rejection or vomiting of milk into the mouth of an adult, even if the person affected is the infant's mother. Such a person